

# The Dying Man's Last Legacy

LXXXV

O R,

PIOUS and AFFECTIONATE EXHORTATIONS

T O A

# H O L Y L I F E.

A S I T

Was left by a Dying Man to his Wife, Children, and Servants, for their Improvement after his Death, and for the Advantage of every true Christian.

My Dearest Wife,

WELL might the Ancient Philosopher call Death, that *Terrible of Terribles*, since it is so perfectly opposite to Nature; and Life is that which every individual Animal so much covets to Maintain; for I would fain know and see that Man that is a rational Creature, who when that Minute comes wherein there will be a total Dissolution of Soul and Body, and a perfect Annihilation of his Worldly Being, does not either receive it with great Regret, or else with Fear and Trembling; and if it be so that the *Heathens* had such a sense of this dismal Hour, that knew nothing they were to give an Account of, upon their Departure; well may those dread it who have heard of *Christianity*, since they must know that there is nothing that they have been culpable of, or deficient in through their whole Lives, but they must immediately upon their Expiration, give a severe and strict account of. They further call *Hora Mortis*, *Hora Virtutis*, and I am sure (and every good Christian will acquiesce with me) it ought to be so with every Christian, that intends to see the Face of God and his ever *Blessed Redeemer*, with Comfort and Satisfaction. Upon this hour depends the Being, and well Being of Soul and Body to all Eternity. Upon this hour depends the everlasting Happiness, or Misery of unhappy Man: How much then ought every Soul to look after, and hourly consider this fatal Hour, than which nothing is more certain, than which nothing more uncertain; the eternal God reserving it wholly to himself, that we might be always in a readiness and not in the least Concerned, or dread it, when it shall please him to cause its Approach.

But, my Dear, not to be too tedious in Generals, I shall descend to some particular Considerations, which immediately concern you as a Wife, and a Mother to Children; and I do not question your perusal of them, not only because they were left you by one who is so near you, but especially because I leave them as the last Legacy you ever shall receive of me in this World: and they say the words of Dying Men make a greater Impression upon the Reader, than any other whatsoever.

First then as a Wife, do not Lament and Grieve at the severe and heavy dispensation of the Almighty who knows what is best for every one, and no doubt lays it upon me, to bring me to himself, and has been pleased in his great Wisdom to put a Period to my Earthly Being, in order to bring me home to him. Therefore be sure you do not Repine at that which it has pleased our Heavenly Father to lay upon me. He always knows what is best for us, and hath promised not to lay more upon his Creatures than they are able to bear; and that if he lays great Afflictions upon them, he will give them great Patience to undergo them. When you find your Spirit sinking, Support it with the reflection of the former great goodness of God, in making us amongst his rational Creatures, but not only so, but also because he has been pleased to give us in a large measure all those things that the World affords; not only Necessaries, (which considered strictly in themselves, are much more than we could reasonably expect at his Hands, I am sure much more than we deserve; for our manifold Enormities, whereby we have so often offended so good and gracious a God) but even Extraordinaries too, so that we may very well say with the holy Psalmist, *My Cup runneth over*.

II. Be always thinking what things he has done for others, and believe that he is able to make up the loss that you at present undergo (if he sees it fit for your good) for he has graciously promised, to be a Father to the Fatherless and a Husband to the Wid-



dow. I say, undergo deprivation with patience, and consider that this parting is but for a little time, it will not be long before we shall again meet in Heaven, there to sing *Eternal Hallelujahs* to the ever Blessed Trinity, with whom is *Fullness of Joy*, and at whose Right-Hand are pleasures for Evermore; where we shall ever remain in the fruition of all things that can yield true satisfaction to the Soul of Man; and that not for an Hour, a Day, a Week, an Year, but to all Eternity; where we shall never part more. Oh! Blessed, and for ever Blessed be that God, that is so good to his Creatures, to provide such a Place for them.

III. Let not the consideration of the Way being Strait and covered with Thorns and Briers, in the least dismay or perplex thee; but consider that the Happiness and Enjoyment will be much more sweet and pleasant; consider that through this rugged Path God brings all his Servants unto their everlasting Rest. And shall we repine at this his holy will, when he intends so much good to us? Nay, when its duration is but short, and our Travel little, in comparison of those innumerable Blessings and happiness we shall enjoy with him for Ever and Ever.

IV. Let your private Prayers and Accesses to the Throne of Grace be often; be no Stranger at the Gate of Mercy, while there is an Ear of favour open; and be encouraged, since God hears the cry of the Widdow to defend her from all Dangers.

V. Be also frequent in reading and consulting the holy Scriptures; they are the Oracles of Truth, and there you may find the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; thence you may suck Promises, that will be as Milk flowing from the Breasts of true Consolation. Oh! can I say it truly that from those Fountains have streamed such Cordials into my Soul, as now enable me to go through with this great sharpness of Death.

VI. Then for thy Servants, be sure that they that abide in thy House may be such as are of Honest Conversation, that in their Lives they may Adorn the

Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; and be sure thy own Example may be a direction to them, and Reproof also if they do amiss. This I thought fit to leave for your direction in the relation of a Mother and Governess of thy Family. But because the Words of a Father Deceased may have some Influence on my dear Children, to them therefore I shall leave something as a Father's Legacy among them.

VII. As a mother, be sure you bring up your Children in the Nurture and fear of the Lord, and if so, you need not be Sollicitous for them, for God has promised to provide for, and take care of those that fear him. Be not over Indulgent, for the sparing the Rod, has often spoiled the Child. Let not thine Eye pity the Correction of thy Children: First give it so that they may be sure to enable all those Godly Exhortations and Admonitions, which you shall give them from time to time, and when they come to Years it will never be forgotten; for *Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is Old he will not depart from it*. I could add many things, but my time being short, I am forced to be so too; but because as I said before, the words of Dying Men have a more than ordinary influence upon the Survivors, especially where they admit of so near a Relation; I shall therefore conclude with this short Adieu to my Children.

My Dear Children,

Tho you are but Young and tender, yet when you come to Years of Discretion, then you may think of, and put in practice this last Advice of your Dying Father: Be obedient to your Mother in all things, left you add to her present Affliction, to whom I refer you for all other wholesome Advice and Godly Instructions, and shall only add this one particular Head: Be sure to avoid that Tympany of the Mind, I mean Ambition than which nothing is more Ridiculous, and nothing more unbecoming a Man; that which has been the Ruine of Thousands, which Phaeton like, soaring too high by the Wings of Ambition, have fallen under hard Destinies; and let them be as a Sea-mark, that you may avoid splitting on that Rock, which was their Ruine, and then you'll be Happy. Be sure you remember this as the last Council of

Your Dying Father  
F. G.

## His PRAYER.

O Most Gracious and for ever Blessed Lord God, I humbly beseech thee, through the Merits and Mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, to blot out all my Iniquities, and not suffer them to rise in Judgment against me, but give me such a portion of thy Grace, that I may withstand all Temptations, as well Ghostly as Bodily. Give me, I beseech thee a sure hope and confidence in the propitiatory Sufferings and Sacrifice of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Accept of his Death and Passion as an Attonement for my manifold Enormities, and so purify my Heart from all sinful and Worldly Corruption, that after the expiration of this Mortal Life, I may rise to eternal Glory. And with me, O Lord, I beseech thee Bless the whole Race of Mankind, but in a more especial manner all those to whom I am so near and dearly Related. Prevent them, O Lord, in all their doings with thy most Gracious Favour, and further them with thy continual Help, that in all their Works they may Glorify thy Holy Name; Grant this for Jesus Christ's Sake, into whose Hands I recommend my Spirit. Amen.

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